

Watersheds

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake and is nature's way of dividing up the landscape. New England includes many eco-systems that, by virtue of their ecological value, recreational value, or proximity to large populations, hold a special significance to us. EPA New England is focusing particular attention and resources on these special places. Working closely with our federal, state and local partners, these community based initiatives are delivering tangible environmental improvements to these watershed areas.

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Charles River



What Makes the Charles River Watershed Special?

- One of the busiest recreational rivers in the world, the lower Charles is lined with boat houses, sports fields, and performance facilities and attracts 20,000 users daily and up to a half-million people for special events.

Why is the River Polluted?

- Stormwater runoff, sewer overflows and illegal sewer tie-ins carry bacterial pollution to the river.
- In 1995, swimming standards were met only 19% of the time, and boating standards met only 39%.

What is "Clean Charles 2005"?

The "Clean Charles 2005" initiative aims to make the Charles River swimmable and fishable by Earth Day 2005.

- In April 2001, EPA issued its annual report card for 2000 on the river's health, giving it a B, the same grade as last year but improved from a D in 1995. The score is based on monthly monitoring results from the Charles River Watershed Association.

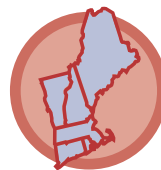
| Report Card 2000 | |
|------------------|----|
| 1995 | D |
| 1996 | C- |
| 1997 | C |
| 1998 | B- |
| 1999 | B |
| 2000 | B |
| 2005 Goal | A |

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

- All stormwater discharges to the river were inspected for illegal connections and removal of them is almost complete, resulting in roughly 1 million gallons of contaminated flow eliminated per day. Also, over 18 miles of leaking sewerlines are being replaced in Waltham and Newton.
- The Watershed Institute launched a program with 9 high schools in the lower Charles to monitor water quality, and bird and insect diversity near the river.
- Enforcement cases were brought and settlements will include projects to restore the Charles River.
- Major progress made on combined sewer overflow (CSO) controls including work to separate stormwater and sewer lines in Stony Brook area, closure of two outfalls, and dechlorination of the Cottage Farm CSO facility.
- Stormwater permit for Boston issued by EPA in 2000.
- Watertown formed "RiverWatch" to patrol and help with river activities.
- Boston University constructed innovative stormwater management controls on campus.
- USGS studies in 2001 show water clarity is caused by suspended solids, salt water intrusion causes significant oxygen depletion, and bottom sediments in river basin are heavily contaminated.

Charles River Watershed



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What Major Actions are Planned for 2001?

- Nationally renowned urban watershed expert will design high impact, low cost stormwater management projects for the lower Charles.
- Education, cleanup and stormwater projects will be undertaken by the Clean Charles Coalition, an organization of private institutions along the Charles.
- Municipalities will implement state-of-the-art municipal stormwater management plans.
- Work with MDC on a masterplan for swimming lagoon at Magazine Beach.
- Outreach to high schools in watershed.
- MIT to host stormwater design contest.

Who are the Partners?

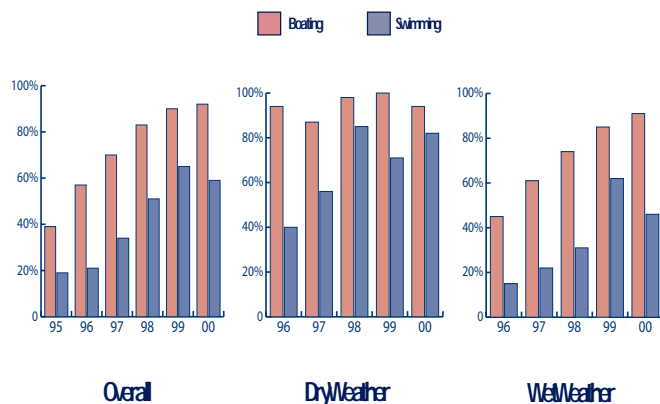
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Want More Information?

- www.epa.gov/region01/charles/
- www.crwa.org
- www.usgs.gov/charles_river
- www.cleancharles.org

Also, order your copy of the EPA's Charles River CD-Rom by calling our Customer Call Center

Overview of Progress Charles River Bacteria Data Percentage Water Quality Standards Attained



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Note: EPA-New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.

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